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TRANSPORTATION  
COMMISSION

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## *Memorandum*

TO: Commission

DATE: March 7, 2008

FR: Deputy Executive Director, Policy

W. I.

RE: 2007 Spare the Air/Free Transit Campaign Evaluation & Recommendations for 2008

The Planning Committee approved the 2008 Spare the Air/Free Transit Campaign, including funding up to two free transit days under the same parameters as 2007 at its March 14 meeting. As part of the Committee's approval MTC and Air District staff were asked to identify:

1. other spare the air incentives that could be considered as we transition from the current Spare the Air/Free Transit Campaign to a broader, climate change oriented campaign
2. the number of exceedances of the region would have had under the new federal 8-hour ozone standard of 75 parts per billion

### **Planning Committee Action**

The Committee received a staff presentation by MTC staff on the 2007 Spare the Air/Free Transit Campaign.

### *Program Evaluation*

Key highlights are as follows:

- Free rides were offered on the first four, non-holiday Spare the Air weekdays of the summertime ozone season (June 1 through October 12). Transit was free all day on Bay Area buses and light-rail; other rail and ferries were free until 1:00 p.m.
- The total budget for the 2007 Campaign for four free transit days was \$8.5 million using a combination of CMAQ funds (88.5%) and Air District funds (11.5%); only two Spare the Air days were issued by the Air District on August 29 and 30, 2008.
- Transit ridership levels rose by 22 percent regionwide over the two Spare the Air/Free Transit days.
- Nearly 10 percent of Bay Area drivers reduced at least one trip in response to the 2007 Campaign.
- Eighty percent of Bay Area residents knew about the Spare the Air campaign and correctly identified its purpose.
- The cost-effectiveness of the 2007 Campaign is \$342,007 per ton of total emissions reduced based on our estimate of 13.45 tons of NO<sub>x</sub>, ROG and PM-10 emissions reduced over the two Spare the Air days.

### *2008 Campaign*

Funding was allocated for four free transit Spare the Air weekdays in 2007, and because only two Spare the Air advisories were issued, there is a remaining balance of approximately \$4 million in CMAQ and TFCA funding. Over the past few months, MTC staff has been collaborating with the Air District to identify the most effective use of the remaining funds for a 2008 Campaign. MTC staff was especially interested in transitioning the Spare the Air/Free Transit Campaign to a broader, climate change oriented campaign.

Both the Planning Committee and the Air District Board approved the following for the 2008 Campaign:

- Transit will be offered for free on two Spare the Air days under the same parameters as 2007.
- Air District staff is to seek more funding for a potential third day of free transit.
- Additional funding will be set-aside for incentives, and a campaign that will broaden to include climate change based outreach and incentives, in addition to episodic ozone information and response
- Surveys will be conducted to gauge effectiveness.
- Total budget for the 2008 Campaign is approximately \$6.7 million, with additional funding supplied by the Air District.

### *Air District Ideas in Lieu of Free Transit Days*

The Air District is considering a number of programs that could be considered as we transition from the current Spare the Air/Free Transit Campaign to a broader, climate change oriented campaign. The focus would be on the general public, employer outreach and youth programs (see Attachment A for a more complete listing developed by the Air District).

### *Exceedances of the New Federal 8-hour Ozone Standard*

The new federal ozone standard was recently reduced by the US EPA from 80 parts per billion to 75 parts per billion. Under the old standard the region had 12 exceedances in 2006, and 1 exceedance in 2007. Under the new standard the region would have had 17 exceedances in 2006 and 2 exceedances in 2007.

The region is currently classified as “marginally non-attainment” for the old 8-hour ozone standard set by US EPA. While we’ve been attaining this standard for the past several years, it remains to be seen whether or not we will be designated non-attainment under the new federal standard; EPA will be making designations by March 2009.

/Therese McMillan/

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Therese McMillan

TM:DK

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## Attachment A

### Examples of 2008 STA Incentives Proposed by the Air District\*

#### Everyone/Employees

- Provide free teleconferencing/ telecommuting on select days.
- Provide athletic shoes/ shoe inserts to encourage the public to walk to work/school.
- Work with online retailers to provide online shopping discounts to decrease trips to stores, etc.
- Provide free tire pressure gauges for optimal gas mileage.
- Promote “low emission lunch” including incentives for employees to bring their lunch from home and rewards to groups who “lunch pool” or have a designated office mate who picks up lunches, etc. to avoid unnecessary trips.
- Provide bicycles for businesses with large campuses to reduce on-campus driving.
- Provide free Translink passes to encourage use of public transit.
- Provide a free month pass to new employees who sign up for "buddy" system and commit to try public transit.

#### Schools/Youth:

- Promote Safe Routes to School programs to encourage students to walk and or to use driving alternatives.
- Provide free Translink passes to encourage use of public transit.

\* The Air District is pursuing opportunities for private companies to partner and provide incentives. Some of these ideas may require additional funding.